

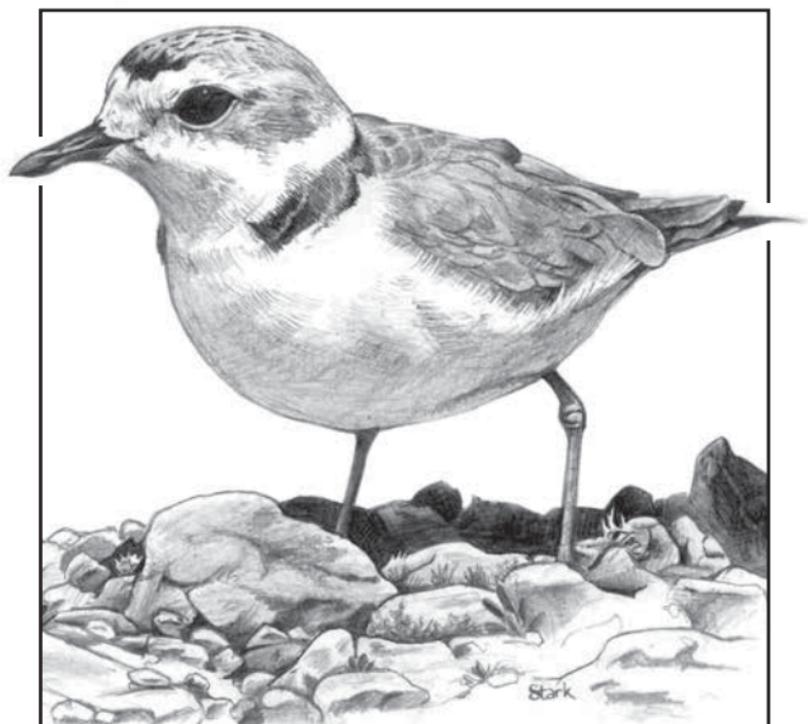
TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

BIRDS

OF

BALMORHEA

S T A T E P A R K



A FIELD CHECKLIST

2015

Cover: Illustration of Snowy Plover by Patrick Stark.

INTRODUCTION

Balmorhea State Park is situated in the heart of the Trans-Pecos Region. The Davis Mountains form a scenic backdrop to this extensive agricultural areas. Balmorhea is best known for the 24 million gallon per day spring located within the park. San Solomon Springs flow into a swimming pool constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps and is the home of two endangered fish, the Comanche Springs pupfish and the Pecos mosquito fish. Two man-made refugia, the Hubbs and San Solomon Ciénegas, within the park are designed to provide long-term, safe habitat for these fish.

The native vegetation of the region is dominated by creosote bush, mesquite, and mimosa as well as saltbush and yucca. The park contains a few acres of Chihuahuan Desert scrub as well as old cottonwoods that line the channels radiating from the spring. The Hubbs and San Solomon Ciénegas offers marsh habitat and have a few scattered cottonwoods around them as well. This concentration of habitat offers excellent birding opportunities year-round.

Four miles northeast of the state park is the town of Balmorhea, which offers birding opportunities in the winter and during migration. The small town has many mature trees to which birds are attracted.

Balmorhea Lake is located about 2 miles east of town. This spring-fed lake is one of the largest bodies of water in the Trans-Pecos. As a result, large numbers of birds congregate here. The lake functions as a storage facility for irrigation and as a result, the water level fluctuates greatly. In dry years the lake can be very low by mid-summer, while in wet years the lake may overflow in to several areas. One of those areas is located on the west side of the lake at the base an earthen

dike. This pond is part of an extensive marsh and offers good birding opportunities. The southern edge of the lake is excellent for shorebirds in dry years when water levels are low. The east end of the lake is where the dam is located. This end of the lake is favored by loons, diving ducks and Clark's and Western Grebes in fall and winter. Below the dam is an area of sedges, reeds and salt cedar. Overall, the lake attracts large numbers of waterbirds, especially in winter.

This checklist is compiled for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department by Mark Lockwood of Alpine, Texas. Nomenclature and organization for this checklist are based upon the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* (7th edition) as currently supplemented.

You may contribute to our knowledge of the park's birdlife by reporting sightings of unusual records or changes in status to the park's office. Please request Bird Sighting Report Forms available at the park headquarters. Return the completed form or lists of sightings to the Natural Resources Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744 or leave them at the park headquarters for forwarding.

Please help us protect the natural avian communities in our parks by refraining from using playback tapes of bird songs. Frequent use of these tapes disrupts normal avian activity patterns, disrupts essential territorial behavior and may lead to nest failure. Thank you for your cooperation.

LEGEND

- A – Abundant – should be seen on 75% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
 - C – Common – should be seen on 50% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
 - FC – Fairly Common – should be seen on 25% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
 - U – Uncommon – should be seen on about 10% or more of trips in proper habitat and season
 - R – Rare – not seen annually but expected to occur again
 - Ca – Casual – three to five records in past ten years
 - X – Accidental – only one or two records in past ten years
 - I – Irregular – absent or in low numbers some years, but may be numerous in others
-
- / – (in summer column before status designation) indicates that the bird's presence in summer is due to early southbound migrants
 - * – (in summer column) breeds
-
- Sp – Spring (March-May)
 - S – Summer (June-August)
 - F – Fall (September-November)
 - W – Winter (December-February)

CHECKLIST

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Black-bellied Whistling-Duck.....	X			
___ Fulvous Whistling-Duck	X	X	X	
___ Greater White-fronted Goose.....	Ca		Ca	R
___ Snow Goose	R		R	U
___ Ross's Goose.....	R		R	R
___ Canada Goose	U		R	FC
___ Wood Duck.....				R
___ Gadwall.....	C		C	A
___ American Wigeon.....	C		C	A
___ Mallard.....	C	FC*	C	C
___ Blue-winged Teal	C		C	Ca
___ Cinnamon Teal.....	C	Ca	C	R
___ Northern Shoveler.....	C		C	A
___ Northern Pintail	C	R	C	C
___ Green-winged Teal	C		C	C
___ Canvasback.....	FC		FC	U
___ Redhead	FC		FC	U
___ Ring-necked Duck.....	C	Ca	C	FC
___ Greater Scaup	R	X	R	R
___ Lesser Scaup.....	FC		FC	FC
___ Surf Scoter	X		R	Ca
___ White-winged Scoter.....	X		X	X
___ Black Scoter				X
___ Long-tailed Duck			X	X
___ Bufflehead	U		U	FC
___ Common Goldeneye.....			R	R
___ Hooded Merganser	R	X	R	R
___ Common Merganser	R		U	U

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Red-breasted Merganser.....	U		U	U
___ Ruddy Duck.....	C	Ca	C	C
___ Wild Turkey	R	R	R	R
___ Scaled Quail.....	A	A*	A	A
___ Northern Bobwhite	Ca	Ca	Ca	Ca
___ Montezuma Quail.....			X	
___ Red-throated Loon.....	Ca		Ca	Ca
___ Pacific Loon	Ca	X	Ca	Ca
___ Common Loon	R	X	U	U
___ Yellow-billed Loon.....			X	X
___ Least Grebe.....	X			
___ Pied-billed Grebe.....	C	U*	C	C
___ Horned Grebe.....	R		R	R
___ Eared Grebe.....	C	R	C	C
___ Western Grebe	C	C*	C	C
___ Clark's Grebe	C	C*	C	C
___ Neotropic Cormorant.....	R		R	R
___ Double-crested Cormorant	FC		C	C
___ American White Pelican	U		FC	U
___ Brown Pelican	X	X	X	
___ American Bittern.....	R	Ca	R	R
___ Least Bittern.....	R	Ca	R	R
___ Great Blue Heron.....	A	U	A	C
___ Great Egret.....	U	R	U	R
___ Snowy Egret.....	U	R	U	R
___ Little Blue Heron.....	Ca		Ca	
___ Tricolored Heron.....	X	R	Ca	
___ Reddish Egret	Ca	R	R	Ca
___ Cattle Egret	U	FC	FC	Ca
___ Green Heron.....	FC	FC*	FC	Ca

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron	U	U	U	R
___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	R	X	R	Ca
___ White Ibis	X	X		
___ Glossy Ibis	X		X	
___ White-faced Ibis.....	C	U	C	R
___ Roseate Spoonbill		X	X	
___ Turkey Vulture	C	C	C	X
___ Osprey	FC		U	R
___ White-tailed Kite.....	X			
___ Mississippi Kite	X		X	
___ Bald Eagle.....	X		Ca	R
___ Northern Harrier	R	Ca	FC	FC
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk.....	R		R	U
___ Cooper's Hawk.....	R		R	U
___ Harris's Hawk	R		R	R
___ Red-shouldered Hawk			X	X
___ Swainson's Hawk	C	FC*	C	
___ Zone-tailed Hawk.....	R	R		
___ Red-tailed Hawk	C	U*	C	A
___ Ferruginous Hawk	U		U	U
___ Rough-legged Hawk.....			Ca	Ca
___ Golden Eagle.....	R	R	R	R
___ King Rail	X	X	X	X
___ Virginia Rail.....	U	R	U	FC
___ Sora.....	U	R	U	U
___ Common Gallinule	Ca		Ca	Ca
___ American Coot	A	R*	A	A
___ Sandhill Crane	R		R	R
___ Black-bellied Plover.....	R	X	U	
___ American Golden Plover	Ca		Ca	

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Snowy Plover	U	U*	U	
___ Semipalmated Plover	U	/U	U	X
___ Piping Plover	X		X	
___ Killdeer	A	C*	A	A
___ Mountain Plover	X		X	X
___ Black-necked Stilt	C	C*	C	
___ American Avocet	C		C	X
___ Spotted Sandpiper	FC	/FC	FC	U
___ Solitary Sandpiper	U	/U	U	
___ Greater Yellowlegs	FC	/FC	FC	U
___ Willet	R	/R	U	
___ Lesser Yellowlegs	C	/C	FC	
___ Upland Sandpiper	R		R	
___ Whimbrel	Ca			
___ Long-billed Curlew	FC	/U	C	R
___ Hudsonian Godwit	X			
___ Marbled Godwit	Ca		R	
___ Ruddy Turnstone	X		X	
___ Red Knot		/X	X	
___ Stilt Sandpiper	R	/U	FC	
___ Sanderling	X		X	
___ Dunlin			X	X
___ Baird's Sandpiper	U	/U	U	
___ Least Sandpiper	C	/C	A	U
___ White-rumped Sandpiper	R			
___ Pectoral Sandpiper	FC	/U	FC	
___ Semipalmated Sandpiper	R		R	
___ Western Sandpiper	C	/C	C	U
___ Short-tailed Dowitcher		/X	X	
___ Long-billed Dowitcher	C	/U	C	U

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Wilson's Snipe.....	C		C	C
___ Wilson's Phalarope	U		U	
___ Red-necked Phalarope.....			R	
___ Red Phalarope			X	
___ Pomarine Jaeger				X
___ Parasitic Jaeger.....			X	X
___ Black-legged Kittiwake.....			X	X
___ Sabine's Gull.....	X		R	
___ Bonaparte's Gull	R		U	U
___ Laughing Gull.....	X	X	X	
___ Franklin's Gull	R		U	
___ Mew Gull				X
___ Ring-billed Gull.....	C	R	A	A
___ California Gull.....	Ca		X	X
___ Herring Gull.....	R		R	Ca
___ Thayer's Gull.....				X
___ Lesser Black-backed Gull.....			X	X
___ Slaty-backed Gull				X
___ Least Tern	Ca	Ca	Ca	
___ Caspian Tern.....		Ca	X	
___ Black Tern.....	U		U	
___ Common Tern.....	Ca		Ca	X
___ Arctic Tern.....		X		
___ Forster's Tern.....	U		U	R
___ Elegant Tern.....				X
___ Black Skimmer		X		
___ Rock Pigeon	A	A*	A	A
___ Band-tailed Pigeon.....			X	
___ Eurasian Collared-Dove	A	A*	A	A
___ White-winged Dove.....	A	A*	A	A

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Mourning Dove.....	A	A*	A	A
___ Inca Dove	R	R*	R	R
___ Common Ground-Dove			X	X
___ Ruddy Ground-Dove			X	
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo.....	R	R*	R	
___ Greater Roadrunner.....	C	C*	C	C
___ Barn Owl	R	R*	R	R
___ Flammulated Owl.....	X			
___ Western Screech-Owl.....				Ca
___ Great Horned Owl.....	U	U*	U	U
___ Burrowing Owl	R	R*	R	Ca
___ Long-eared Owl				Ca
___ Short-eared Owl.....				Ca
___ Lesser Nighthawk.....	C	C*	C	
___ Common Nighthawk.....	U	U*	U	
___ Common Poorwill.....	R	R	R	Ca
___ White-throated Swift.....	R	R	R	R
___ Blue-throated Hummingbird.....			X	
___ Lucifer Hummingbird		X	X	
___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird.....	X		Ca	
___ Black-chinned Hummingbird.....	A	A*	C	
___ Anna's Hummingbird			Ca	Ca
___ Broad-tailed Hummingbird.....	Ca	/U	U	
___ Rufous Hummingbird		/U	U	
___ Calliope Hummingbird.....		Ca	Ca	
___ Belted Kingfisher.....	C		C	C
___ Lewis's Woodpecker	X		X	X
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	R		R	R
___ Red-naped Sapsucker	R		R	R
___ Ladder-backed Woodpecker	FC	FC*	FC	FC

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Downy Woodpecker.....				X
___ Northern Flicker	C		C	C
___ American Kestrel.....	C	R	C	C
___ Merlin.....				R
___ Aplomado Falcon ¹			X	
___ Peregrine Falcon.....	R	X	R	Ca
___ Prairie Falcon	U		U	U
___ Olive-sided Flycatcher.....	R		U	
___ Western Wood-Pewee	U		U	
___ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			X	
___ Willow Flycatcher.....	R		R	
___ Least Flycatcher	Ca		R	
___ Hammond's Flycatcher.....	Ca		Ca	
___ Gray Flycatcher	R		R	
___ Dusky Flycatcher.....	R		R	
___ Cordilleran Flycatcher.....	U		U	
___ Black Phoebe.....	U	U*	U	U
___ Eastern Phoebe.....	X			R
___ Say's Phoebe	C	C*	C	C
___ Vermilion Flycatcher.....	C	C*	C	R
___ Ash-throated Flycatcher	FC	FC*	FC	
___ Couch's Kingbird.....	X			
___ Cassin's Kingbird.....	FC	FC*	FC	
___ Western Kingbird	C	C*	FC	X
___ Eastern Kingbird	Ca			
___ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.....	U	R*	U	
___ Fork-tailed Flycatcher			X	
___ Loggerhead Shrike.....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ White-eyed Vireo.....	X			
___ Bell's Vireo		I		

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Plumbeous Vireo	R		R	
___ Cassin's Vireo.....	R		R	
___ Warbling Vireo.....	R		R	
___ Philadelphia Vireo	X			
___ Red-eyed Vireo			X	
___ Steller's Jay	X			X
___ Blue Jay			X	X
___ Western Scrub-Jay.....			Ca	Ca
___ Chihuahuan Raven	U	U*	U	U
___ Common Raven.....			FC	FC
___ Horned Lark.....	C	C*	C	C
___ Purple Martin	X	/X		
___ Tree Swallow.....	U		C	R
___ Violet-green Swallow.....	FC		FC	
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow	C		C	R
___ Bank Swallow	R		U	
___ Cliff Swallow	C	C*	C	
___ Cave Swallow	C	C*	A	Ca
___ Barn Swallow.....	A	A*	A	X
___ Mountain Chickadee.....				X
___ Black-crested Titmouse	R		R	R
___ Verdin.....	U	U*	U	U
___ Bushtit	Ca	Ca	Ca	Ca
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch.....				I
___ White-breasted Nuthatch.....			R	R
___ Brown Creeper	R		R	U
___ Rock Wren.....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ Canyon Wren				X
___ House Wren.....	U		U	R
___ Winter Wren				X

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Sedge Wren.....	R		R	R
___ Marsh Wren.....	FC		FC	A
___ Bewick's Wren.....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ Cactus Wren.....	C	C*	C	C
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet.....				Ca
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	C		C	C
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.....	R		R	Ca
___ Black-tailed Gnatcatcher.....	Ca			Ca
___ Eastern Bluebird.....	Ca		Ca	Ca
___ Western Bluebird.....			I	I
___ Mountain Bluebird.....			I	I
___ Townsend's Solitaire.....			I	I
___ Swainson's Thrush.....			X	
___ Hermit Thrush.....	U		U	U
___ Wood Thrush.....			X	
___ American Robin.....	I		U	U
___ Varied Thrush.....			X	X
___ Gray Catbird.....	X			X
___ Curve-billed Thrasher.....	FC	FC*	FC	FC
___ Brown Thrasher.....				R
___ Crissal Thrasher.....	R	R*	R	R
___ Sage Thrasher.....	I		I	I
___ Northern Mockingbird.....	C	C*	C	FC
___ European Starling.....	C	C*	C	C
___ American Pipit.....	C		C	A
___ Sprague's Pipit.....				X
___ Cedar Waxwing.....	C		C	A
___ Phainopepla.....			R	R
___ McCown's Longspur.....				I
___ Chestnut-collared Longspur.....				I

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Snow Bunting.....			X	
___ Northern Waterthrush.....	X			
___ Golden-winged Warbler.....	X			
___ Black-and-white Warbler.....			X	
___ Prothonotary Warbler.....	X			
___ Tennessee Warbler.....			X	
___ Orange-crowned Warbler.....	U		U	U
___ Nashville Warbler.....	R		R	
___ Virginia's Warbler.....	X			
___ MacGillivray's Warbler.....	R		R	
___ Common Yellowthroat.....	U		U	R
___ Hooded Warbler.....	X			
___ American Redstart.....	Ca			X
___ Northern Parula.....	X		Ca	X
___ Yellow Warbler.....	FC		U	
___ Palm Warbler.....	Ca			X
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler.....	A		A	A
___ Townsend's Warbler.....			R	
___ Wilson's Warbler.....	C		C	Ca
___ Painted Redstart.....	X			
___ Yellow-breasted Chat.....	Ca			
___ Green-tailed Towhee.....	FC		FC	FC
___ Spotted Towhee.....	FC		FC	FC
___ Rufous-crowned Sparrow.....	U	U	U	U
___ Canyon Towhee.....	A	A*	A	A
___ Cassin's Sparrow.....	C	C*	C	U
___ Chipping Sparrow.....	C		A	C
___ Clay-colored Sparrow.....	U		U	I
___ Brewer's Sparrow.....	C		C	C
___ Field Sparrow.....	R		R	R

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Black-chinned Sparrow				X
___ Vesper Sparrow	C		C	C
___ Lark Sparrow.....	C	C*	C	C
___ Black-throated Sparrow.....	C	C*	C	C
___ Sagebrush Sparrow.....				R
___ Lark Bunting.....	A		A	A
___ Savannah Sparrow	C	/R	C	C
___ Grasshopper Sparrow	U		U	U
___ Baird's Sparrow				X
___ Le Conte's Sparrow	X		X	R
___ Nelson's Sparrow			X	X
___ Fox Sparrow	R		R	R
___ Song Sparrow	FC		FC	FC
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	C		C	C
___ Swamp Sparrow.....	U		U	FC
___ White-throated Sparrow.....				R
___ Harris's Sparrow.....	X			X
___ White-crowned Sparrow	A	X	A	A
___ Dark-eyed Junco.....	C		C	FC
___ Hepatic Tanager.....	X			
___ Summer Tanager.....	FC	U*	U	
___ Western Tanager	U		R	
___ Northern Cardinal.....	U	U*	U	U
___ Pyrrhuloxia.....	A	A*	A	A
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak.....	R			
___ Black-headed Grosbeak.....	U		R	
___ Blue Grosbeak	C	C*	C	
___ Indigo Bunting.....	X			
___ Lazuli Bunting.....	R		R	
___ Painted Bunting	U	U*	U	

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Dickcissel	R		R	
___ Bobolink.....	X			
___ Red-winged Blackbird	A	A*	A	A
___ Eastern Meadowlark.....	C	C*	C	C
___ Western Meadowlark	U	R*	U	U
___ Yellow-headed Blackbird.....	FC		FC	R
___ Rusty Blackbird				X
___ Brewer's Blackbird.....	A		A	A
___ Common Grackle.....	R	Ca*	R	R
___ Great-tailed Grackle.....	A	A*	A	A
___ Bronzed Cowbird.....	I	I		
___ Brown-headed Cowbird.....	C	C*	C	A
___ Orchard Oriole.....	C	C*	U	
___ Hooded Oriole.....	X			
___ Bullock's Oriole.....	C	C*	R	X
___ Baltimore Oriole.....	X			
___ Scott's Oriole	R	R*	R	
___ Red Crossbill			X	X
___ House Finch.....	A	A*	A	A
___ Pine Siskin.....	I		I	I
___ Lesser Goldfinch	FC	FC*	FC	I
___ American Goldfinch	I		I	I
___ Evening Grosbeak			X	
___ House Sparrow	A	A*	A	A

¹ – from reintroduction program

CITATION

Lockwood, Mark W. 2015. Birds of Balmorhea State Park and vicinity: a field checklist. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Natural Resources Program, Austin, Texas.

In 1983, the Texas Legislature created the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. This fund may be used for nongame wildlife and endangered species research and conservation, habitat acquisition and development and dissemination of information pertaining to nongame management. Money for this fund is obtained through private donations and sale of nongame wildlife art prints and stamps. This fund now gives Texans a unique opportunity to help support this state's valuable and sensitive nongame resources. Your individual contributions and purchases of nongame art prints and stamps will help determine the level of nongame conservation activities in Texas. For more information call toll-free (1-800-792-1112) or contact: **Nongame and Endangered Species Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.**

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Natural Resources Program
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